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Summary: Steve Harrington knew he was a jerk long before he started dating Nancy. Steve and Jill, two sophomores out of their depth at the prom, go on an unexpected midnight adventure. Steve is faced with an uncomfortable revelation about himself, and Jill must decide where to draw her line in the sand. One-shot. Steve Harrington/OC.

The Things We Can't Fix

PROM 1983

Jillian Perry took a sip of her punch, fanning her face with her hand. She'd been at the center of the dance floor with friends for almost a full hour, and she'd needed to slip out and take a breather. She adjusted the neckline of her strapless dress, a little concerned that it would fall too low, and turned to watch the action on the dance floor, drink in hand. Through the crowd, she spotted a member of her group, Joey, trying to do the worm, and threw her head back, laughing. He was failing so miserably that it was almost painful to watch.

"He's got it all wrong - the momentum comes from the legs," someone spoke up from beside her. Jill's laughter faded, and she cleared her throat as she identified the newcomer, Steve Harrington. He looked out at the dance floor, and she eyed him discreetly, wondering what illegal substance might have given him the idea to come and socialize with her.

"Maybe you should go show him then," she said, nodding in the direction of the dance floor. Harrington laughed, shaking his head.

"No way." He replied. She shrugged and went back to watching her friends, assuming he would grab his drink and wander off. Instead, he poured himself some punch and casually leaned against the table next to her. Jill immediately decided she would rather be on the dance floor again, but figured she'd wait a minute to be polite and spare him his pride. She didn't expect him to speak again.

"You having fun?" He asked over the music, still watching the dance floor. Jill's eyebrows furrowed. She and Steve had gone to school together for years, but they didn't talk unless the circumstances required it. They'd had a few antagonistic group project experiences *at best*. Jill knew well that he and his friends weren't worth her time.

"Yeah," she dead-panned, hoping he would take the hint. "Are you?"

He shrugged a shoulder, "Could be better. I think my date has ditched

me."

Good for her. Jill thought, but instead, she responded "Who's your date?"

"Andrea Reynolds." He replied, shoving his free hand in his pocket. A chortle escaped Jill's mouth before she could stop it. Andrea Reynolds was one of the most popular senior girls. She'd just broken up with her football-star boyfriend a few weeks ago, and to say that she was inconsiderate would be putting it lightly.

"Hey," Steve said, his pitch rising defensively at her reaction. "Who's *your* date then?"

"Don't have one." Jill said.

"Sophomores can't come without dates." He replied, puzzled. Jill rolled her eyes, turning to look at him,

"One of my friends is on the prom committee." She told him.

"Oh, so you're here illegally." He said, louder than necessary, trying to rile her. He didn't like her condescending tone. Jill glared at him.

"Shouldn't you be getting some punch for your date?"

"I have just as much right to stand here as you." He retorted.

"Not if you're bothering me," She said, her shoulders tense.

"Nobody said *you* have to stand here." He reminded her. She went to argue, before realizing that he was right - she could just go back to her friends. So she did, without another word.

"I should've brought something to change into." Jill complained to her friend Amy as she waded through the sea of teenagers in the crowded house. Amy was her junior friend on the prom committee who had gotten her into the dance.

"It wouldn't feel like After Prom if you changed out of your dress." Amy called over her shoulder as she led the way to the kitchen.

"It's *not* After Prom." Jill muttered. The school had planned some kind of sanctioned alcohol-free party after the dance in an attempt to keep the students out of trouble, but the upperclassmen had, of course, organized their own entertainment for the night. There were multiple house parties happening tonight, and most people, including Jill and Amy, planned to do a crawl from party to party. Jill pulled at and adjusted her dress for the hundredth time that night. She had found it second-hand at a thrift shop, and although she wasn't a big fan of purple, it had fit her well enough and was appropriate for the occasion, which was all she could really ask for on her shoestring budget. They made it into the kitchen, and Amy immediately dipped into the spiked punch.

"This is what I'm talkin' about!" She exclaimed, earning a couple of whoops and hollers from people standing nearby.

"Keys." Jill demanded, holding out a hand. Amy rolled her eyes as she sipped her drink, before digging into her pocket and producing the keys to her Dad's Camaro. Jill had agreed to be the designated driver for the night - one, because she didn't totally trust Amy to stick to the job if it was hers, and two, because she wanted to keep a clear head tonight anyway. It was tempting to drink and let loose for the night, but she wasn't born yesterday, and she knew that being one of the only sophomore girls at this party made her a particularly vulnerable target. Jill searched the kitchen for soda but saw nothing non-alcoholic and sighed. It would be a long night.

Jill spent the next hour and a half dancing, listening to drunk people tell stories, and watching the same couple break up and reunite (*twice*). She was keeping an eye on Amy, who was already in the full swing of intoxication, but she didn't bother gluing herself to her side. Amy often ran off with other people while they were out, and Jill didn't mind too much. She had the kind of personality that could make friends quickly, so she wasn't afraid to fly solo - especially when she was the soberest person in the room anyway.

Even though she hadn't been drinking, Jill scrambled with everyone else when the cops busted Party #1. Luckily, she was in the kitchen, so it was easy to slip out the back door and take off across the neighboring lawns before the officers made it to the back of the

house. She made it to the corner where they'd parked and didn't see Amy anywhere. Sighing, she discreetly wandered back down the street, looking for any sign of her friend. As she was returning to Amy's Camaro, she paused to watch Steve Harrington attempting to get his key into the door of his own car. Jill groaned - she'd seen the boy doing a keg stand at the party not even 30 minutes ago. He would get picked up by a cop real fast - if he was lucky enough to run into one before driving his car off the road.

"Harrington!" She called out, causing him to lose his focus and drop the keys. He nearly bowled over trying to pick them back up. Jill crossed the street and approached him, muttering under her breath the whole time. "Oh, for the love...give me those." She demanded, reaching out to grab the keys from him. He drew his arm back, but his reflexes were too slow, and she still snatched them easily.

"What the hell?" Steve grumbled, "Those are mine."

"You can't drive." Jill replied. "Where is your date?"

She didn't anticipate that his date would be any more capable of driving than he was, but she wanted to find someone else to take responsibility for him. Harrington scoffed.

"Your guess is as good as mine, Princess." He answered with a shrug. Jill cringed at the nickname, but chose not to address it.

"Well, who can I call to come get you?" She pressed. He scoffed again but didn't answer, stumbling back against the car and choosing to just lean there. Jill glanced back and forth between his BMW and the Camaro she'd driven. She might as well be *someone's* designated driver tonight. She threw her head back with a pained groan.

"Move, Harrington." She commanded, shooing him away from the driver's side door.

"What're you doing?" He asked as she climbed in and shut the door, rolling the window down.

"Get in if you're coming." Jill warned.

"It's *my car*." Steve drunkenly reminded her.

"Then you'd better get in."

Steve rounded the front end of the car, talking to himself the whole way, before settling into the passenger's seat and closing the door.

"Where we goin'?" He asked, turning the radio up. Jill winced and turned it back down just a bit before responding.

"We're stopping by Josie Andrews' party." She began, earning a whoop and a holler from her passenger. "*Just* to check in and find my friend Amy." She added.

"Alright, Harrington. You wait here." Jill commanded, pulling off her seatbelt after parking the car outside of Josie Andrews' house. He scoffed.

"Yeah, right." He replied, stumbling out of the car anyway. Jill sighed. How had she gotten stuck with him? Was it too late to disown her conscience and dump him here? She glanced at the BMW - the only ride either of them had now. Yep, she was stuck with him.

"Just stay close, then." She said. He opened his mouth to respond, but she quickly cut him off. "I *don't* want to have to come find you."

"Say no more." He replied dutifully, following her into the house. The police raid clearly hadn't deterred anybody, as Party #2 was noticeably crazier than the last one. She straightened with determination and began to surge through the crowd, looking for Amy. Some rough-housing nearby caused a guy to stumble into her, and she nearly fell on her ass. Thankfully, a few bystanders managed to grab her arms and help her stay upright.

"Woah, watch it, Powers." Steve warned the boy, who was far too drunk to bother taking it to heart.

"Oh hey, Jill!" The boy, Jake Powers, greeted happily, clearly not even realizing that he'd run over her. His voice was far louder than necessary, and his breath was rank, but Jill tried not to let it show on her face.

"Jake, have you seen Amy Collins?" She asked.

"What?" He shouted over the music, having trouble focusing.

"Amy Collins!" She repeated. "Is she here?"

Jake continued to shake his head, either not hearing or not understanding, but another girl nearby piped up:

"The police picked her and a few other girls up." She told Jill. Jill exhaled deeply, chewing on the inside of her cheek. She had been afraid of that. It was better news than her getting into the car of someone else who had been drinking, or wandering around outside somewhere by herself, but she felt a little bit bad; she hoped Amy wouldn't be mad at her for running from the police without thinking to find her first.

"Alright, let's -" She turned, only to find that her new ward was no longer behind her. "Steve?" She called, looking for any sign of his hair standing out above the crowd. She groaned and turned on her heel, heading for the kitchen. He'd probably gone for a drink. When she reached the kitchen, she was pleased to find that it was far less crowded, and doubly pleased to see that there was a soda selection this time. Grabbing a coke, she leaned back against the counter and sipped on it.

"Wasn't expecting to see you out." Robby Painter greeted as he sidled up next to her. Robby was a junior, and he was on the baseball team. He wouldn't even know that she existed if she wasn't in junior English with him. He sat next to her and enjoyed teasing her and acting up to impress her. She wasn't impressed, and knew from the start that he was the kind of boy she'd been warned to stay away from. She'd known he would be at prom, and he and his friends were half the reason she'd decided against drinking tonight. She took another sip of her Coke, ignoring him.

"I like your dress." He added. Jill couldn't help but smile at that, but did her best to hide it in her cup. He caught it anyway and stepped closer, "So how was your first prom?"

"Underwhelming." She said, lowering her drink and crossing her arms over her stomach.

"Oh, come on, it couldn't have been that bad. If I had known you were interested, I would've asked you myself."

"Hindsight's 20/20." She replied with a close-lipped smile and a shrug.

"Yeah, well, the night's still young." He replied, so close now that she was trying not to cringe at the smell of his breath. He was very drunk, and Jill quickly decided that she wanted to be done with this exchange. There was an expectancy in his eyes that made her uncomfortable.

"Well, not for me. I have a curfew, so -" She began to move, but he boxed her in, placing his hands against the counter on either side of her. "Look, you've obviously had a bit too much to drink, and I want to leave." She tried again firmly.

"Come on, stay and chat a while." He coaxed. "We've been doing this dance all year."

"I'm going home." She said, growing tired of being polite.

"Thought you didn't have a home." He replied. The harshness of the words were chilling when paired with the charming smile he still wore. He was referring to things she had written and been forced to share in their English class. Jill placed both hands on his chest and shoved hard.

"Come on, Jill," He attempted, his look becoming remorseful as he grabbed her elbows. "I didn't mean anything by it."

"Stay away from me." Jill warned, raising her voice intentionally to draw attention from others. People did turn and look, but, being intoxicated (and being high schoolers), they were more interested in watching than intervening.

"Jill, you're causing a scene," Robby chastised, still keeping a grip on one of her arms. "I'm just trying to talk."

"Hands off, Painter." Steve interrupted, forcing himself between them. Robby was forced to let go and take a step back.

"Are you kidding me with this, Harrington?" Robby scoffed.

"Try me." Steve challenged. Jill could see from her place behind him that he was swaying slightly.

"Let's just go, Steve." She insisted, ready to call the night quits. She'd gone to the prom to hang out with her friends, and now she was standing around watching two guys she barely knew argue.

"Another couple of sophomores who think they're hot shit." Robby announced smugly, clearly trying to take hold of the narrative in front of the growing crowd. Steve apparently decided that he was done talking, because he shoved Robby, who only stumbled back a foot before coming back, fist swinging. Upon impact, Steve immediately stumbled back into Jill, who attempted to catch him. All she really did was slow his fall. She stepped over him, where he now lay on the kitchen tile, and put herself between the boys, kneeling to inspect Steve. The house had erupted in chaos as some cried out in distress and others egged Robby on. He loomed over Jill, waiting for her to move so he could continue the beating, but his buddies from the baseball team were soon pulling him out of the kitchen.

"Get him outta here, Jill." One of them ordered.

"Come on, Steve." Jill coaxed the foolish boy, who was still lying on the floor, muttering unintelligibly. It took a lot more coaxing and muscle to get him back on his feet, but they were soon stumbling out the back door, Steve leaning heavily on her.

"I can't wait to be out of this stupid dress." Jill muttered under her breath, struggling to support him and keep her strapless dress righted at the same time. Steve snickered, and she cut him off "Not a word, Harrington."

"I...din...say anything..." He slurred. Whether it was from the alcohol or the hit he'd taken to the jaw, Jill was unsure. When she finally got him to the car, he seemed to have come around from the hit, but was still pitifully drunk. Settling into the driver's seat, Jill sighed and laid her head against the headrest, taking a moment.

"You okay?" Steve asked earnestly.

"Yeah," Jill replied in a low tone. "Thank you. For that." She added. Though this help had been stupid, ineffectual, and embarrassing, it meant a lot that he hadn't stood by and watched like everyone else.

"Of course," He said, shrugging. "You watched my back, I watched yours." He said, as if it was the simplest and most obvious course of action - the *only* possible course of action.

"Right, well...let's get you home." She said, starting the car and putting on her seatbelt.

"Are you sure? I haven't seen you drink *anything* tonight." He said.

"Yes, that was the point." Jill retorted as she began driving. "That's why I'm able to drive you around tonight. You're welcome, by the way."

"Mm." Steve hummed in thought. He was clearly judging her.

"What?" Jill challenged, taking the bait. "You don't know me."

"I know you're responsible." Steve said. "I know you get along with everybody - but you also don't care about people's approval. Or, at least, you want everyone to think you don't. Oh, and you *hate* me and my friends." He added.

"Where do you live?" Jill asked. She was not going to be baited and provoked by a drunken boy. He told her which neighborhood he lived in, and she turned in that direction. The car was silent for a few minutes, and Jill thought that Steve had fallen asleep until he abruptly sat forward and reached into the floorboard, rifling around under his seat.

"What are you doing?" Jill asked, resisting the urge to push him back in his seat and keep his head from hitting the dash. He straightened again with a bottle of rum in his hands.

"No!" She exclaimed, making a grab for it, but he pulled it out of reach and she was forced to return her focus to the road. "Come on, Harrington, you've had enough."

"It's not for me, it's for you. Pull over."

"I'm driving." Jill reminded him.

"Hence the 'pull over'" He said.

"You have a shocking lack of self-preservation." She observed as she pulled over, just for a chance to properly confiscate the bottle.

"Alright, hand it over." She said, holding out an expectant hand.

"Oh no, I will hold on to this, but you can have..." he began, digging a shot glass out of the console and filling it, "this."

Jill gaped at his readiness. He must have pregame'd with his date in the car before prom. She shuddered to think what else might have happened in the car during the course of the evening. Steve pushed the glass into her hands.

"Steve, it's not a good idea." She said firmly.

"Come on, I'll take care of it. Tommy and Carol can come get us." He said. Jill blanched. "I'll come back and get my car in the morning."

She pondered it. She certainly wasn't going to ride home with Tommy H. But she did have a cousin who would probably come pick her up without asking too many questions. She took the shot glass from him and threw her head back, sending the liquid down in one swift movement. It burned her throat enough to make her eyes water, but she resisted coughing. She had another, and they sat in silence for a minute.

"Aren't your parents going to wonder why you have to get up in the morning and go get your car?"

"They won't notice." He replied, shrugging a shoulder. "What about you? You got a curfew?"

"Not really." Jill said. There was a long silence that seemed to indicate that they both had complicated home lives they didn't really want to talk about. Steve poured her another shot, and she drank it.

"So why *do* you hate me?" He asked after a few moments.

"I don't hate you." Jill said. "I just hate the company you keep."

"What, Tommy and Carol? They're nice."

"To you."

Steve shifted in his seat, "When have they ever been mean to you?" He challenged. He felt confident that his group had never bothered her. Nobody had reason to bother Jillian Perry.

"It doesn't matter if they're nice to me. I watch them harass people every day." Jill said, not ceding an inch. "If you see your friends being horrible to other people, they're not 'nice.'"

Her tone had a hint of finality to it, and he knew he wasn't going to change her mind, so he dropped it. The two sat in tense silence for a few minutes. Steve offered her another drink, and she downed it before speaking again, her tone softer this time.

"So, what's the deal with your date?"

Steve snorted. "My cummerbund wasn't the right shade of blue."

"That's why you're exiled?" Jill asked, raising her eyebrows. She could feel the alcohol beginning to affect her as the urge to giggle bubbled up inside her.

"Well, that was just the first in a series of offenses." He quipped, chuckling. The moment he started laughing, it spread like wildfire, and Jill threw her head back, laughing hard.

"All punishable by death, I'm sure. You're lucky she's so merciful." Her reply was broken up by fits of giggles.

"She's not so bad." Steve defended her, his face growing serious. Jill stopped laughing as well, and the car was quiet as they looked at each other. Moments later, they were erupting again, tears streaming down Jill's face.

"She's the worst," She hiccupped.

"She really is," Steve agreed, clutching his stomach.

"Last year," Jill began, barely able to calm herself enough to tell the story, "she stole my gym clothes."

"What? Why would she need to steal your gym clothes?" He asked as Jill took the rum bottle from him and took a few swigs directly from it. The image was indeed a strange one - one of the richest upperclassman girls at school stealing stinky gym clothes from some freshman. She coughed as the alcohol went down the wrong pipe, and Steve gave her a few ineffectual slaps on the back. "How did you know they were yours?"

"My initials are sewn onto the shirt pocket." She replied. Steve absolutely lost it again, his laugh coming out in wheezes.

"So she just...wore it...in front of you...?"

"Yes! The whole rest of the year!" Jill exclaimed, the alcohol beginning to affect how well she could regulate her volume.

"Did you say something?"

"Yes! I told her that my clothes were 'lost' and that she must've mistakenly grabbed them," she explained, practically shouting now. "She said her mom bought those for her for Christmas."

Steve was practically in his grave with that revelation.

"She said her mom bought her *gym clothes* for Christmas." He repeated.

"With JP stitched on the front pocket." She added, wiping at her teary eyes as she started to come down from her laughing fit. "I'm telling you, she's a sociopath."

As they continued to come down from their fits, they groaned and clutched at their ribs. Jill laid her head back against the headrest, catching her breath. She felt a steady, easy buzz from the alcohol now that made her feel lighter.

"Doesn't Andrea live in this neighborhood?" She asked, rolling her head to the side to look at Steve. He was also resting his head against the headrest, eyes closed. He lazily popped one eye open and looked

out the car window to see where they'd pulled over.

"Yeah. A block or two that way," He answered, gesturing vaguely with a hand. Jill was quiet for a long moment, and when Steve opened his eyes and glanced over at her, she was smiling in the dark.

"What?" He asked.

"Feel like going for a walk?"

"What are we doing? She's probably not even home." Steve whispered as they approached the house.

"Exactly." Jill replied, detouring them around the side of the house.

"Someone's gonna see us." Steve said, following her. She ignored him, eyeing the second floor windows.

"It's definitely one of those." Jill announced. She'd once been to this house in elementary school for a get-together after a soccer scrimmage, and she vaguely remembered going into Andrea's room upstairs. She walked over to the trellis that led to a slab of roof under the windows. "Help me up."

"You're kidding, right?" Steve replied, "You want to *break in*?"

"The lights are all off. We'll be quiet." Jill assured him. "You're a bigger square than I anticipated, you know." She added. Steve bit the inside of his cheek and glanced up at the windows, hands on his hips.

"Alright, gimme your foot."

Jill flashed a hundred-watt smile and stepped into his hand, letting him hoist her up. She grabbed the trellis quickly to steady herself, feeling a bit of a head rush. She collected herself for a moment and then began to climb. Steve followed beneath her, entreating her with an anxious "please don't fall."

Jill realized she should have ditched her heels a little too late when one foot slipped and she slammed against the wall. She clung tightly to the trellis, screwing her eyes shut in a pained wince. Steve had

choked out an alarmed "Oh God" and placed a hand on her ass to help brace her.

"You okay?" He asked as she struggled to regain her footing. Steve flinched as the layers of her puffy dress hit him in the face. She managed to place her bare foot (the shoe had fallen off when she slipped) into a foothold, but continued to struggle with the other one.

"Here, hold on," Steve instructed, grabbing her foot. Wrapping his arm through a loop of the trellis so he could free both hands, he unstrapped her other heel and dropped it onto the grass below. This made the climb much easier for Jill, and they kept climbing until they reached the roof's edge.

"Don't stand up," Jill whispered when they managed to pull themselves up. "We're not steady enough." The two crawled quietly along the roof, looking into the windows until they found the room that was probably Andrea's.

"I have a pocket knife," Steve whispered, feeling around in his pockets, but the window slid open easily in Jill's hands - it hadn't even been locked. Steve watched her climb in and shushed her as she tried not to knock over all the stuff on the desk sitting under the window. When it was his turn, he ended up knocking over more than she did, and they bickered for a few moments in the dark room.

"You act like this is your first time climbing in a girl's window," Jill said, earning a glare from Steve. The two of them spent a minute milling around the room, snooping and picking up random objects. Jill picked up a mug and immediately dropped it, cursing as it hit the floor with a loud thud. She gave Steve a nervous look before glancing at the door that led to the hallway.

"Don't worry - her parents aren't home. They're out of town." Steve whispered.

"What?" Jill whispered back. "You couldn't have told me that sooner? How do you even know?"

Steve waggled his eyebrows a bit in response, and Jill groaned. He and Andrea had obviously discussed the possibility of coming back

here tonight.

"I wonder why *she* isn't hosting a party tonight." Jill said.

"Probably because she didn't want people to see her Care-Bear collection." Steve whispered back, causing her to snicker.

"Wait, why are we still whispering?" Jill wondered, causing them both to dissolve into giggling fits.

"What's our goal here?" Steve asked when they'd settled down and gone back to business.

"We need to do something that has a high impact, but doesn't indicate that someone broke in." She said, looking around the room thoughtfully.

"We could write something on the mirror. Make her believe there's a ghost in her room." Steve suggested.

"Too obvious." Jill murmured. He walked up next to her and opened the top drawer of

Andrea's dresser, but she slammed it shut before he could look inside.

"It's not a panty raid, Harrington." She reprimanded him.

"I wasn't -" He began, but Jill interrupted him.

"Wait here, and don't touch anything else." She said, leaving the room. Steve sighed as she disappeared from sight.

"What the hell are you doing, Steve?" He muttered to himself, still heavily feeling the effects of the alcohol he'd consumed all evening.

When Jill reappeared a few minutes later, she was holding a tupperware container.

"Is that shrimp?" He asked, eyes lighting up.

"Yeah," Jill answered, setting it down on the desk under the window.

She opened it and slapped Steve's hands away when he reached in to grab one for himself.

"They could be old." She insisted, having just pulled them from the fridge downstairs. Steve picked one up and sniffed it.

"Smells okay to me." He said, shoving it into his mouth. Jill watched his face for any sign of distress while he chewed, and then eyed the container, contemplating. She *was* hungry. She shrugged, popping one into her own mouth, discarding the tail out of the open window.

"So this is the plan?" Steve asked, his mouth already full with two more shrimp. "Eat her leftovers? We'll *show her*."

"Not quite," Jill answered, popping another shrimp into her mouth and then grabbing a whole fist-full. She placed a foot on the chair and used it to step up onto the desk, careful to avoid the objects that they'd already knocked over and fixed twice. She eyed the curtain rod, standing on tiptoe, before handing the shrimp down to Steve. "Here, hold this. And *don't* eat them."

"What are you doing?" Steve asked, watching her with furrowed brows and squinted eyes, straining to watch her movement in the dark room. Without answering, she reached up and grabbed the globe-like fixture at the end of the curtain rod, unscrewing it. When she'd managed to separate the end from the rod, she reached down and traded Steve for the shrimp. Steve watched as she methodically forced each piece of shrimp into the hollow rod, prodding it with her finger to make room for the next one.

"Holy shit," He said, watching in disbelief.

"She'll never figure out where the smell is coming from." Jill said, taking the globe back from him and replacing it on the end exactly as she'd found it. Steve helped her down from the desk, and she stood next to him.

"Is it too cruel?" He asked. The two of them stared up at the curtain rod in thought, heads cocked in the same direction.

"Nah," they said in unison, before bursting into one of their laughing

fits.

"Okay, okay," Steve said, trying to get them back on track. "We have to make sure everything is exactly how we found it."

The two took a minute to look everything over before Steve climbed up over the desk and into the window sill.

"I'll go first," He said.

"Why don't we just use the door?" Jill asked, jutting a thumb over her shoulder. "We can lock it behind us."

"Oh. Right."

The streetlights cast large shadows behind Jill and Steve as they walked down the sidewalk. Jill had opted not to put her shoes back on, instead carrying them limply at her side. They had decided to walk back to Steve's car, keeping an eye out for a pay phone along the way so that they could call for their rides. They were starting to come down from the giddy phase of their drunkenness and move into exhaustion, so they moved slowly on the walk back.

"How did you even come up with the shrimp thing?" Steve asked.

"The shrimp was a lucky find." She said, "I was just looking for food to put in there."

"Right, but the idea to put it in the curtain rod?"

"That credit goes to my mother," She admitted. "We did it once when I was a kid. We were going to pack up and leave this man that she was dating. We left behind some boiled eggs as a parting gift. When I asked my mom why, she said 'because he turned out to be a very bad egg.'"

Steve chuckled, and she smiled wistfully at the memory, though it didn't quite reach her eyes.

"Your mom sounds cool." He said.

"When she wants to be," Jill replied with a shrug. It was quiet for a long moment, and Steve took the liberty of changing the subject.

"I'm going to be so hungover in the morning." He said.

"Oh, definitely." Jill agreed. She didn't think she'd be in too bad of shape herself. She hadn't had nearly as much to drink as he had, and as long as she drank a lot of water before bed, she was usually okay.

"Have you ever had breakfast at Benny's?" Steve asked.

"Benny's doesn't serve breakfast." Jill said in disbelief.

"Yes, they do!" Steve insisted, "And it's amazing! Best kept secret in Hawkins."

"Wow! And now I'm in on it." Jill said.

"We should go," Steve continued, shoving his hands into the pockets of his tuxedo slacks. "We're gonna need a lot of coffee and eggs in the morning."

Jill stopped short, surprised by this turn in the conversation. She hadn't realized it was going to be an invite. She felt soberer now as she thought about how to tell Steve Harrington that she wasn't interested in a sequel to tonight.

"Oh," She began, sounding dumb even to her own ears, "I don't think..."

"Doesn't have to be tomorrow," He added, sensing that he was about to be rejected and compensating nervously. Jill opened her mouth to continue, but was cut off by the short blip of a police siren as a patrol car pulled up to the curb next to them.

"Damn it," Steve cursed under his breath, pushing his hands into his hair. They didn't bother trying to run, instead waiting for the officer to get out of his car, still more focused on the awkward moment that they'd just shared than about the fact that they were in big trouble.

"This night has really gotten away from me." Jill muttered, massaging her temples as the officer approached.

"Where are you kids coming from?" The young deputy asked, hands resting on his belt. Steve and Jill exchanged a look, eyeing each other's clothes. Jill noticed that her dress was practically sitting sideways on her body and grabbed the bodice, twisting it.

"The prom?" Steve answered.

"The prom ended hours ago," the deputy said. "We got a report of two individuals breaking into a house not too far from here."

"Shit, that's awful." Steve said earnestly, "I hope it's not my house."

Jill fidgeted nervously as the deputy eyed them with obvious suspicion.

"Do I need to get out the breathalyzer, or can we just skip to the part where I take you to the station and call your parents?" He asked. The two of them sighed and followed him to the patrol car.

"No funny business," He said, eyeing them warily through the rearview mirror as they settled into the backseat. Jill fought the urge to scoff, instead turning to look out the window. The backseat felt uncomfortably silent, even as the deputy turned up the music on the radio. Jill turned to look at Steve, who was tousling his hair in frustration.

"You didn't take anything, right?" She breathed, glancing at the cop to make sure he wasn't listening. The drunkenness was one thing, but she didn't want to get pinned with the break-in if he was carrying evidence.

"No," Steve answered. Jill turned back to look out the window, dying to be at home in her bed already. She began shifting in her seat, a sheen of sweat breaking out on her skin. Surely she hadn't drank enough to make herself sick so immediately? She turned to see that Steve was now leaning forward in his seat, head resting between his knees.

"Steve, are you -" She began, but the rest of her question was drowned out by the sound of Steve's wrenching as he puked on the car floor.

"Damn it!" The deputy shouted. Jill covered her mouth and nose, her stomach churning wildly at the sight and smell of the vomit. The deputy opened the partition and handed back a bag, which Jill received just in time to puke in. Another bag was pushed through the gap for Steve and she grabbed it, forcing it into his face - he looked much sicker than she did.

"The shrimp?" She whispered, both of them still leaning toward the floorboards.

"The shrimp." He whispered back, groaning.

"Harrington is one thing, but *you* should know better." Was all Hopper said when he saw Jill and Steve sitting in the stiff wooden chairs outside of his office. They'd spent the past twenty minutes taking turns running to the bathroom. Jill still felt sick as a dog, but she was pretty confident that the bad shrimp (and some of the alcohol, too) was now out of her system.

"Are you going to call her?" Jill asked, eyes downcast.

"I have to, Jill." He said. "Be glad that's *all* I'm going to do."

Jill nodded, folding her hands on her lap and staring at her shoes as Hopper went into his office to make the call.

"What did he mean, 'Harrington's one thing'?" Steve asked, offended. Jill said nothing.

"Your mom's gonna be pretty mad, huh?" He tried again after a minute, watching her chew on her lip.

"My mom's not coming." She said quietly after a moment. And then, because she was exhausted and fed up and couldn't bring herself to care what he thought right now, she added: "she's an alcoholic."

"Oh." Steve replied, unsure what to say. "I'm sorry."

They were quiet for the next few minutes, taking tiny sips of the water that the deputies had offered them, mindful of not upsetting their stomachs again.

"Jill!" A small, dark-haired woman called out, rushing into the station and making a b-line for them. Jill sat up straighter, becoming much more alert.

"Aunt Joyce, I'm so sorry -" She began. The woman knelt down in front of her and took Jill's face in her hands, looking her over.

"Are you alright?" Joyce asked. Jill nodded. "Come on, let's get you home."

Joyce helped her up and placed a hand on her back as they headed for the exit.

"See you...at school..." Steve said half-heartedly as Jill left without any acknowledgement besides a quick glance over her shoulder as her aunt ushered her out the door.

"Aunt Joyce, I am so sorry." Jill said, breaking the silence on the car ride home. Joyce didn't say anything, watching the road. "I promise, I didn't drink very much-"

"Do you know why your mom became who she is?" Joyce asked, causing Jill's mouth to snap shut. Jill shook her head, biting her lip.

"Genetics?" She guessed.

"Partly." Joyce conceded. "But it was also because she didn't have a childhood. She was never a normal teenager. She was always taking care of me and our Dad - of the whole house."

The bit that Joyce didn't add to the end, *'the way you lost your childhood looking after her,'* seemed to hang in the air between them, unspoken.

"So...you're not mad?" Jill asked, her voice cracking - her throat was still raw from vomiting.

"No," Joyce said after a moment. "I don't worry about you, Jill. You're a smart kid, and you have good judgement."

"I didn't tonight. I should be punished." Jill said matter-of-factly.

"Alright," Joyce said with a small smile, "What would you prefer? Grounding or extra chores?"

Jill considered it for a moment and decided that she would pick the one that would be most helpful to her Aunt. She'd promised herself when she moved into the Byers home that she would never be a burden on her aunt, and she'd broken that promise. She was eaten up with guilt right now.

"I'll take the chores."

"Alright, we'll see what we can drum up for you."

When Jill went to her locker before lunch period on Monday, Steve Harrington was waiting there and greeted her as if she were an old camp friend he hadn't seen since 6th grade. She exchanged an incredulous look with Jonathan, who was walking alongside her. She had, of course, told her cousin all about her strange prom experience.

"Hey, Jill," Steve said brightly. He acknowledged Jonathan with a mere nod before turning back to her.

"You ready for that test in Haverstock's class tomorrow?" He asked, leaning on the lockers nearby as she opened her own and started trading out books. He was referring to the one class that they shared this year - history. They never even spoke to each other in that class unless the occasion called for it.

"Not yet, but hopefully I will be." she replied congenially.

"If you want, we could help each other review later and-" he began, but was interrupted by Tommy H. and Carol, who strolled right up to the three of them, Tommy's arm thrown over Carol's shoulder. Jill could feel the tension radiating from behind her as Jonathan straightened a bit, unsettled by their presence.

"Hey Steve," Tommy greeted, before looking at Jill and Jonathan. "What's up guys?"

Though the greeting was harmless enough, it was full of barely contained laughter, and Jill got the sense that they'd said something

nasty at someone else's expense before approaching. They had never been particularly kind to Jonathan, and Jill was occasionally the target of that ridicule as well, depending on what kind of mood they were in, and how much Jill stood in the way of their fun. Jill had always fared better than Jonathan in social situations at school, but she was never willing to make friends at the expense of her cousin's feelings. She stared at Tommy, unsmiling, her eyes narrowing the tiniest bit in a challenge.

"Hey, I'll see you at lunch." Jonathan told her quietly, excusing himself from the situation and exiting down the hall.

"I'll see you at lunch." Tommy mocked, addressing Steve. Carol snickered at that, and Jill's eyebrows furrowed. There wasn't even anything to laugh at - they were just being childish. Steve's eyebrows furrowed, too, as his friends walked away, as if he was just noticing for the first time that they were assholes. Still, he said nothing to them.

"Hey, just ignore them -" He said, turning back to her. Jill slammed her locker shut with a close-lipped smile, cutting him off.

"You know, we don't have to pretend to be friends just because I offered to drive you home once." She said shrugging a shoulder. Steve's face fell.

"I wasn't prete- I was just..." he stuttered, blindsided by the straightforwardness of her rejection. "I had fun with you on Saturday. I thought we could be friends."

"I don't mean to be a jerk, but I don't think so." Jill told him honestly.

"Look, I'm not an idiot." He said, "You think I'm not a good person."

"It doesn't matter what I think," Jill said simply, her shoulder brushing his as she stepped past him. "Good luck on that test." She called over her shoulder before disappearing around a corner.

Jill was glad when Steve had chosen not to approach her again, though she was nervous to go to her 5th period history class at the

end of the day. She didn't want to have to blow him off again, although she would if needed. When she entered the classroom, she was relieved to find that he was sitting in the same back corner he always did, and he didn't try to make eye contact as she walked to her own seat.

The skin between her eyebrows wrinkled when she saw the bag sitting on her desk, and she didn't open it right away, choosing to sit down and get her books out first. She even managed to wait until after class began, but eventually, she couldn't ignore the folded note lying on top of it any longer. She picked up the note and unfolded it, glancing around to make sure that nobody near her was snooping.

I lied. I did take something.

She put the note down and quietly opened the bag, careful not to attract the attention of the teacher. Inside she caught a glimpse of neatly-folded white fabric. In the top corner was a pocket, with the initials J.P. embroidered in elegant green script. The corners of Jill's lips quirked up as she stared at it, but she soon caught herself. Clearing her throat, she stuffed the bag under her desk and straightened, going back to her work.

One good deed didn't make a good man. Anyone could be nice to a girl they were interested in. This changed nothing.

The smile had been brief, but Steve had caught it. He leaned forward in his desk, tapping his pen against his bottom lip as he watched her back. *One day, he thought, I'll change your mind.*

Thanks for reading! This was originally conceived as a one-shot, but I can't lie - I'm interested in exploring what Steve's character transformation in the series would mean for him and Jill later down the road. It's possible there will be more of this in the future.

Special thanks to Emma Thompson, who gave me the most savage revenge idea ever. She mentioned the curtain rod trick in an interview I watched, and I've been itching to write about it ever since.